

desire, she laboured instead to show him that she could not enjoy society.

It was late before she started along the weed-bordered path to Hannah's house; John, who was in a field that she had to pass, came tramping between the rows of corn to give her an encouraging word. Her experience was of course far less dreadful than her forebodings. Hannah met her outside the green lattice and before she realized it, she was in a corner of a sofa and Kate put a ridiculous little bramble-bush of a kitten in her lap. Anybody can talk about kittens—so, too, she found that she knew something about raising big pansies, when Hope Hopkins told of her failures in that direction. She had a bit of fancy-work in her hands (something learned at the asylum), and Mrs. Ostrander admired it and begged to learn the stitch. There continued to be more easy talk, friendly gossip, and sensible discussions, but nothing too profound for her understanding. Before she heard John's step on the cobble-stone walk she had conquered her timidity enough to study the two pretty girls, to envy them their trick of saying bright little nothings. She furtively watched Hannah, aware of the charm of her gracious, unhurried motions, studying her delicate oval face, changeful eyes and sensitive lips. This was the woman for whose wisdom and purity John had already revealed his unbounded respect. She did not wonder, neither was she quite jealous, she was only, in a far-off, lonely way, sorry that she was not like Hannah.

Such a charming dining-room as that now was, with open windows westward to the flaming sunsets, open door to the garden sending in its tributes of rose and lily fragrance! Within there was the beautiful new china and glass, with Andy as table waiter, in spotless white apron and gravely consequential mien.

Katharine, sitting between John and his wife, and mindful of her instructions, strove to keep them entertained.

"Friends, do you realize," said Mrs. Ostrander, after the first biscuit, "that we the people of Cairnes have not had a single picnic to the lake this year, and here it is midsummer? I propose that we have one this coming week. Miss Hamilton must see the inhabitants drawn up in battle array. She cannot judge of all by the select specimens before her and—"

"O, Mrs. Ostrander," protested Hope Hopkins, "can't you wait until that 'supply' arrives? It would be so easy to

introduce him in that way to everybody. Father commended him, whoever he may be, so earnestly to my mercy, and insisted that he must be made acquainted with all the people."

"Remember the hare must be caught before the cooking," put in Mr. Ostrander; adding, "what are we going to do for a parson, John?"

"I have no idea. We must send to Langbury."

"In the meantime I agree with Hope that we will not precipitate a picnic. I will show Katharine the natives by degrees, as she or they can bear it," laughed Hannah.

"You have probably seen a few places, Miss Hamilton, as remarkable as Cairnes," said Mr. Ferris, turning to look at her for the first time. Her frank, pleasant face attracted him always afterward.

"After supper," remarked Maria, "Miss Hamilton will tell us about her travels. It is the dream of my life to go to Europe, and I have a passion for hearing everything a traveller can tell me."

"But I have no lecture prepared on the subject, dear Mrs. Ostrander, no panorama, not even a magic lantern. Still, if you care to catechise me, I shall answer to the best of my ability."

It was a warm evening, so they carried chairs out under the trees and watched the afterglow of sunset on the lake while Kate, yielding to Mrs. Ostrander's entreaties, modestly narrated whatever she fancied could be of interest. She was a natural story-teller, and a bit of a mimic. She pictured for them life on an ocean steamer and in foreign cities, told of odd characters she had met, all the while revealing herself as an unaffected girl. Hannah was quite proud of her. Hope, who, being of finer fibre than the rustic maidens thereabout, had lacked for congenial companionship, rejoiced at her coming. To Mary Ferris, after years of isolation from young people's society, she was a most brilliant creature. Her little drolleries seemed dazzling, and her pretty ways uncommonly fascinating—even Kate's simple toilet, taken with her youthful grace, was a marvel of elegance in Mary's opinion. She grew silent and moody. How easy it was for all these women to keep up a smooth flow of pleasing talk. If she forced herself to speak, she fancied that her words fell out dry and void of all interest. John was talking and listening to them as never to her—alert, full of animation in telling this Miss Hamilton of his schoolboy notions